

THE SACRED WOUND

an excerpt from "In Search of the Beloved" by Dr. Jean Houston

*Call the world, if you please,
The veil of Soulmaking.
Then you will find out
The use of the world...*

-JOHN KEATS

Sacred psychology is the process and practice of soulmaking; and soulmaking, as you may have discovered, is not necessarily a happy thing. Critical parts of it are not. As seed making begins with the wounding of the ovum by the sperm, so does soulmaking begin with the wounding of the psyche by the Larger Story.

Soulmaking requires that you die to one story to be reborn to a larger one. A renaissance, a rebirth, occurs not just because there is a rising of ancient and archetypal symbols. A renaissance happens because the *soul is breached*. In this wounding, the psyche is opened up and new questions begin to be asked about who we are in our depths. These powerful questions need not lead to alienation and withdrawal, but can lead to the seeding of the world with the newly released powers of the psyche. A larger story is revealed by the wounding. When psychological energy is no longer bonded to social forms, then, uncensored, depth images and archetypes can have their day. Whether they serve to madden or illumine is up to us.

The classical Renaissance was a golden time when internal and external realities flowered together. The internal world knew the cosmos for its own, and the external world became "psyche-sized." The spillover of psyche's abundance into the outer world primed the creation of vital and resonant arts, sciences, history, statecraft, and philosophy.

So, too, is your wounding, the breaching of your soul, an invitation to your renaissance. Our woundings tell us that old forms are ready to die, however reluctant the local self may be to allow this to occur, and that hitherto unsuspected new forms are ready to flower.

As the "ties that bind" loosen in our culture and in our psyche, the incidence of woundings accelerates and comes in many guises. Consider your physical woundings: illness, accidents, birth or genetic defects. Consider the acts of violation upon your person: rape, incest, child abuse, torture, robbery. Consider the losses you have endured: the loss of a deep relationship to death, the loss of a job, the loss of a marriage, the loss of sanity, the loss of self-esteem, the loss of status, the loss of financial security. Consider those woundings that have afflicted cultures and nations: famine, plague, enslavement, war. The list seems endless.

Wounding involves a painful excursion into pathos, wherein the anguish is enormous and the suffering cracks the boundaries of what you thought you could bear. And yet, the wounding pathos of your won local story may contain the seeds of healing and transformation. The recognition of this truth is not new. In the Greek tragedies, the gods force themselves into human consciousness at the time of pathos. It is only at this time of wounding that the protagonist grows into a larger sense of what life is all about and is able to act accordingly.

The wounding becomes sacred when we are willing to release our old stories and to become the vehicles through which the new story may emerge into time. When we fail to do this, we tend to repeat the same old story over and over again. If you have a neurosis or psychosis, it probably originated in pathos that was not worked out to its source in a Larger Story. If we would only look far enough and deep enough, we would find that our woundings have archetypal power. In uncovering their mythic base, we are challenged to a deeper life. As Carl Jung has reminded us, it makes a difference whether we serve a "mania," which is detestable and undignified, or a "god," which is full of meaning.

An abundance of sacred wounding marks the core of all great Western myths and their attending gods and humans: Adam's rib, Achilles' heel, Odin's eye, Orpheus's decapitation, Inanna's torture, Prometheus's liver, Zeus's split heat, Pentheus's desmemberment, Job's boils,



Jacob's broken hip, Isaiah's seared lips, Persephone's rape, Eros's burnt shoulder, Oedipus's blinding, Jesus' crucifixion. All of these myths of wounding carry with them the uncanny, the mysterious, the announcement that the sacred is entering into time. Each prefigures a journey, a renaissance, a birth or rebirth, a turning point in the lives of gods and mortals. In sacred psychology, the possibility for therapeia, for healing and wholing, seems to require acknowledgment and understanding of our deepest wounds.

Wounding involves the breaking or penetration or opening into the human flesh or soul by a force or power or energy coming from beyond our ordinary recognized boundaries. The violation of these boundaries makes us vulnerable to be reached by larger forces, Larger Story. Would there be much of a story around Jesus if he had been left to preach around Galilee and ply his trade as a carpenter? Only by being wounded unto death could he be prepared for the resurrection. In the Gospel of John, we are told: "I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit." In our woundings we are forced to stop, to shift, to move in new directions, to face what had been hidden to consciousness, to be pruned of our primal growth so that we may bear fruit.

Instead of discrediting the phenomena of the myth as does a normative psychology, sacred psychology show the ingeniousness and therapeutic power of myth in its ability to illumine and redeem the sacrality of the phenomena around wounding that occurs in our lives. It is not that the myth is wrong, but rather that we are ignorant of its contents. Without pathos, the larger story that the myth is trying to tell would not be whole. Myth allows both hearer and teller to see the Pattern that Connects. Similarly, in our own existential times of wounding, pathos can tap us directly into the deeper topographical levels of the psyche, where we both reflect and join the Larger Story.

In times of suffering, when you feel abandoned, perhaps even annihilated, there is occurring - at levels deeper than your pain - the entry of the sacred, the possibility of redemption. Wounding opens the doors of our sensibility to a larger reality, which is blocked to our habituated and conditioned point of view. Consciousness that had been previously well robotized and trained to the consensual perspective of our particular culture is excruciatingly sensitized and has a vastly extended sensorium. Pathos gives us eyes and ears to see and hear what our normal eyes and ears cannot.

Wounding is the traditional ground for the healer. The shaman-healer is often wounded and marked as part of his preparation. Those who have, through accident or illness, vividly confronted the reality of their own death often return to life with a renewed sense of wonder and strength. Moshe Feldenkrais developed his revolutionary methods of awareness through movement initially as a way of living with his badly damaged knees. F. Matthias Alexander, once a Shakespearean actor, developed his approach to proper body use from observing the postural causes of his own chronic laryngitis. Addicts who have managed to overcome their addiction have served as powerful guides to those caught in the throes of addiction. The god-man Asclepius was said to walk with a crippled leg; the Fisher King, who bears the secret of the castle of the Grail, has a wound that will not heal. Consider how your own wounding may be offering training in compassion and deepening.

Disconnected from the myth, from the Larger Story, and from the sacred, we seek to "understand" our pain, or find relief from it as quickly and comfortably as possible. Or we resort to blame and seek to avenge the wrongs done to us. Thus we turn our backs on the knocking at the door of our souls.

Sacred psychology offers an alternative: not always a comfortable one, or even always a "safe" one, but a very powerful one. Sacred psychology invites you to allow your wounds to stay open, to take off the Band-Aids and cover-ups; to allow the engagement of the Great Story; to link the local self to universal patterns; and to sacrifice the old story to which you were bonded so that the new story may become manifest through you.

This is not an invitation to self-pity, self-flagellation, victimization, or martyrdom. It is not an invitation to court disaster or revel in inauthentic suffering. Nor is it an invitation to the realm of Pollyanna. Suffering is real and soul-rending in our time. Despair, hopelessness, burnout, and a radical experience of impotence strike many who are most committed to offering alternatives.

And yet...And yet...the myth reminds us that the Phoenix rises from the ashes, burning bushes speak when all hope is lost, the blind Oedipus becomes the revered wise counselor of Athens, the Grail is ultimately found, and the Fisher King and the wasteland are healed.

In the cosmos of the psyche, our lives are governed by mythic and symbolic catagories, and myths have their own patterns and logic, independent of individual ego processes. The sacred wound is the critical act through which the mortal achieves divinity. Christ must have his Crucifixion. Dionysius must boast to attract Titanic enemies. Persephone must be carried down to Hades and married to Darkness. Artemis must kill him who comes too close. So, too, must you breach that story that denies your full unfolding. You may deny and resist this truth with all the strength you can muster, but the woundings will continue, sometimes relentlessly, apparently meaninglessly, until you agree to wake up.

The two stories in Part Four serve to illustrate the power of wounding to deepen and extend both the story itself and all of those beings who play a part in and are touched by the story.

Before turning to them, however, you may need to re-vision and re-member your own wounding so that its larger pattern is revealed. We have been tyrannized by the local historical psychological story. While there is nothing wrong with this story, which carries its own level of truth, as the only story it is extremely limited, limiting, and isolating. In the process offered here, you are going to explore your own wounding, one that is central to you at this time, and allow it to unfold the greater dimensions and perspectives of which it is a part. Thus you will take your story from the THIS IS ME level to the WE ARE level, allowing the I AM to guide the process. Through the local story of your particular wounding, you will open the door to the Larger Pattern, the mythos itself, that is trying to enter your life.

It is essential that you ask the terrible and unavoidable questions: "Where and by whom were you wounded?" and "What or who is trying to be born in you from that wound?" In engaging these questions you may find the gestations of your own possibilities, the stigma that could well be the stigmata, the moment of your election to a larger reality. The process given here allows you to explore the broader implications and the depth story hidden in your wounding.



THE "SOULFORCE" PRINCIPLES OF GANDHI & KING

Guidelines for Doing Justice Nonviolently



By the Rev. Dr. Mel White, PO Box 4467, Laguna Beach, CA 92652 RevMel@aol.com www.soulforce.org

In 1994, with the publication of my autobiography, *Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay And Christian In America*, I became an activist almost accidentally. The sudden, unexpected interest in my story catapulted me into the front lines of a war being waged against homosexuality by powerful religious and political forces. I had no training or experience in activism. I didn't know there were rules for doing justice nonviolently, rules established in the heat of battle by leaders of the great nonviolent justice movements.

That same year, I was installed as dean of the Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Community Church in Dallas, Texas. As the number of gay men murdered in Texas increased, so did my anger. I struggled with an unsettling reality that the primary sources fueling the violence and hatred of these children of God were Christian brothers and sisters I had known and loved.

For two years, I tried to dialogue with Christians whose anti-gay rhetoric sanctioned and led (directly and indirectly) to the suffering and death of God's lesbian and gay children. Among them were people I knew well, many of them my old ghost-writing clients--Billy Graham, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, D. James Kennedy. I wanted these media preachers to understand the terrible human consequences of their anti-gay message. They refused to see me. Finally, in 1994, I wrote to my friends, "It's hopeless. I'm not even going to try to get through to them anymore."

One week later, Lynn Cothren, Coretta Scott King's personal assistant, warned me in a letter from the King Center that I had broken a primary rule for doing justice non-violently: Giving up on my adversary was "an act of violence." When I admitted that I didn't know there were such "rules," Lynn pointed me gently to the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. King pointed me to Gandhi, and Gandhi and King both pointed me back to Jesus.

During his early years as an attorney in South Africa, M.K.Gandhi, a Hindu, was deeply moved by the teachings of Jesus, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Ruskin. "The Sermon on the Mount," says Gandhi, "went straight to my heart."¹ Determined to reduce 'principles into practice,' Gandhi created Satyagraha: a plan of action (a) for the development of our inner lives and (b) for the transformation of society. Gandhi developed and refined his 'truth force' or 'soul force' principles while leading justice movements in South Africa (1893-1915) and India (1915-1948).

While a student at Crozer Theological Seminary, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. discovered Gandhi's 'soul force' rules and used them to shape his own nonviolent civil rights movement in America (1955-1968). "While the Montgomery boycott was going on," King writes, "India's Gandhi was the guiding light of our technique of nonviolent social change... Nonviolent resistance had emerged as the technique of the movement, while love stood as the regulating ideal. In other words, Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method."²

Now, my partner, Gary Nixon, and I are searching the lives and teachings of Gandhi and King to see how their "soul force" principles apply to our current struggle for justice--a struggle not just for God's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children, but for all who suffer injustice. In the study and practice of "soul force," our own spirits have been redirected and renewed.

¹ Gandhi, *An Autobiography: My Experiment With Truth*, 1957, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 68.

² Washington, James M., Editor *Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 1986, HarperSan Francisco, p. 16.



SIX "SOUL FORCE" BELIEFS ABOUT MYSELF

1. ...I believe that I am a child of a loving Creator, of the Soulforce at the center of the universe.
2. ...I believe that I was created to help my Creator bring justice to all those who suffer injustice.
3. ...I believe that I will not discover my purpose or realize my power (my own "soul force") until I join my Creator in doing justice (making things fair for all those who suffer injustice).
4. ...I believe that when I join my Creator in doing justice, my own life will be renewed, empowered, and made more meaningful.
5. ...I believe that in serving others, it is as much my moral obligation to *refuse* to cooperate with evil as it is to cooperate with good.

SIX "SOUL FORCE" BELIEFS ABOUT MY OPPONENT

1. ...I believe that my opponent is also a child of the Creator, that we are both members of the same human family, that we are sisters and brothers in need of reconciliation.
2. ...I believe that my opponent is not my enemy, but a victim of misinformation as I have been.
3. ...I believe that my opponent's motives are as pure as mine and of no relevance to our discussion.
4. ...I believe that even my worst opponent has an amazing potential for positive change.
5. ...I believe that my opponent may have an insight into truth that I do not have.
6. ...I believe that one day my opponent and I will understand each other and that if we conduct our search for truth guided by the principles of love, we will find a new position to satisfy us both.

FIVE "SOULFORCE" VOWS THAT LEAD TO PERSONAL RENEWAL & THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

1. **Vow to Truth**
I promise to seek the truth, to live by the truth, and to confront untruth wherever I find it.
2. **Vow to Love**
I promise to reject violence (of the fist, tongue, or heart) and to use only the methods of nonviolence in my search for truth or in my confrontation with untruth.
3. **Vow to Self-suffering**
I promise to take on myself without complaint any suffering that might result from my confrontation with untruth and to do all in my power to help my adversary avoid all suffering, especially that suffering that may result from our confrontation.
4. **Vow to control our passions**
I promise to control my appetite for food, sex, intoxicants, entertainment, position, power that my best self might be free to join with my Creator in doing justice (making things fair for all).
5. **Vow to limit our possessions**
I promise to limit my possessions to those things I really need to survive and to see myself as a trustee over all my other possessions, using them exclusively to help make things fair for those who suffer.

Gandhi and King on "Civil Rights Marches"*

1. A march has a specific, narrowly-focused, clearly-stated goal.
2. A march is not an end in itself but one tactic in a total strategy to reach a specific goal.
3. A march is only called for after negotiations have broken down with an adversary and then only to compel the adversary back to negotiations.
4. A march is costly (in time, money, and energy) to volunteers and the organizations they represent and that cost must be honestly and openly considered before the march is called.
5. A march is timed for maximum effect.
6. A march must require risk, courage, and stamina for the marcher (to demonstrate the marcher's total commitment and genuine concern).
7. A march is a serious-minded attempt to persuade the adversary that the request is just. A march is not a parade, party, or celebration that may confuse the adversary or even give the adversary more reason to hate or fear the marchers.
8. A marcher must be carefully trained in the goal of the march & sign a pledge to maintain standards of behavior & dress during the march that will convince the adversary that the marcher is determined & sincere.
9. A march is not called to support a candidate, party, or issue which may divide the marchers, but a specific goal or purpose upon which the marchers are united.
10. A march must focus the print and electronic media on the specific, clearly-stated, narrowly-focused goal before, during, and after the march to avoid any confusion as to why the march has been called.
11. A march must be directed by carefully trained monitors and before the march all marchers must agree to obey those monitor's commands.
12. A march must not seek to embarrass, coerce or terrorize the adversary, but quietly, calmly, and courageously convince the adversary that the marcher's goal is just.
13. A marcher must understand the principles of nonviolence and pledge to refrain from violence of fist, tongue, or heart during the march.
14. A marcher must be a person of faith.

NOTE: Gandhi, a Hindu, was not sectarian in this rule. He defined God as Truth but began each day with personal and group prayer and meditation on the holy writings of all the "great religions." In 1939, Gandhi asked marchers to sign a pledge that he or she "must have a living faith in God." Gandhi embraced agnostics and atheists as friends in transition who have abandoned old, inadequate gods and are people of faith on a journey back towards the Spirit of Truth.

Dr. King, a Baptist Christian preacher, marched arm-in-arm with Jews, Catholics, mainline Protestants and other people of faith, agnostics and atheists but in 1963, in Birmingham, for one example, he asked marchers to sign a pledge that they would "meditate daily on the life and teachings of Jesus." Neither man required sectarian allegiance to any one statement of faith or religious practice, but both men stated clearly that a truly nonviolent march cannot be carried out by marchers without some faith commitment.

*Gandhi and King had little time to systematize the principles of Satyagraha, or "soul force." I have extrapolated these principles from their essays, diaries, articles about conducting effective marches, and copies of the actual pledges Gandhi and King asked their marchers to sign in South Africa, India, and in the United States. If you are interested in the original data read from *The Collected Works of Gandhi* (Navijivan Publishing) or King's collected writings in *Testament of Hope* (Harper Collins).



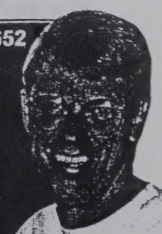
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Write, E-mail, or fax your address for a complimentary copy of their *Soulforce* Newsletter.

For a copy of Mel's 30 minute video, *The Rhetoric of Intolerance*,
enclose a check made out to Video 1 for \$6.55 (to help duplicate, package, and mail.)

For a copy of Mel's 24 minute video, *How Can I Be Sure That God Loves Me, Too?*
enclose a check to Video 2 for \$10 each (to help duplicate, package, and mail.)

For a copy of Mel's newest video, *The Trials of Jimmy Creech*,
enclose a check to Video 3 for \$10 each. (A check for \$25 to Videos will get you all three.)





DOING JUSTICE THROUGH SOULFORCE³

I. "Help those who suffer" II. "Help cut off the suffering at its source"



I. Help those who suffer THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMS: "...quiet, solid, substantial work in direct personal service of the masses, suffering for them, organizing them, and educating them in the ways of nonviolence, thus bringing about a peaceful atmosphere of solemn determination.." ⁴ (Ex., community centers, churches and synagogues, counseling programs, telephone hot lines, food/clothing banks, grassroots training & organizing, parades, rallies, celebrations, bookstores, etc.)

IIA. Help cut off the suffering at its source THROUGH NEGOTIATION: 9 Nonviolent Guidelines to help us persuade our adversary to end the words or actions that lead to suffering.

1. Before any negotiations begin, I will investigate my opponent's position carefully, trying to understand exactly what my opponent is saying or doing and why my opponent is saying or doing it.
2. I will confront my opponent's words and/or actions that lead to suffering on the basis of truth alone (without resorting to half-truth, exaggerations, unsubstantiated claims, or lies of my own.)
3. I will confront my opponent's words and/or actions lovingly, without resorting to physical, spiritual, or psychological violence.
4. I will confront my opponent's words/actions relentlessly, refusing to give up or to compromise my truth (or any portion of it) unless my opponent proves me wrong. In that case, I will admit my error gratefully, seek my opponent's forgiveness, and if all is resolved, end the confrontation in peace.
5. Throughout our negotiations I will work to earn my opponent's trust and friendship.
6. I will refuse to break off our negotiations until we have reached a third position that is acceptable to us both.
7. I will question the ideas that lead to suffering. I will not question the motive or the integrity of the person who holds those ideas.
8. If my opponent and I cannot reach an acceptable third position, I will ask my opponent to choose with me a neutral, third party, respected by us both to arbitrate our differences.
9. If my opponent breaks off negotiations, refuses to arbitrate, or maintains negotiations to stall or end our confrontation, I will have no other option but to take direct action against my opponent.

IIB. Help cut off the cause of suffering at its source THROUGH DIRECT ACTION: 12 Nonviolent Guidelines for the use of direct action to get negotiations started when our adversary refuses to negotiate or when negotiations break down (ex., boycott, fast, march, strike, civil disobedience, etc.)

1. The primary goal of any direct action is reconciliation, not victory.
2. Any direct action must be planned and conducted to win the heart and mind of our opponent, not to terrorize, overwhelm, embarrass, shame or force our opponent into submission.
3. A direct action is taken when we know no other way to end the impasse and to revive the discussion that will lead us to a third position we both can accept;
4. Although one individual alone may enter into a direct action against an opponent's untruth, it is always important to consider the greater good that comes by making our case clear to the public.
5. Sometimes just in the act of recruiting/ training allies, the opponent is moved to reconciliation.
6. The primary principles of 'soul force' (truth, love, self-suffering) must guide our relationships with our friends and allies as much as it guides our confrontation with the adversary;
7. Any direct action(s) we take must be as pure and as loving as the end we seek;
8. We refuse to participate in any direct action that involves physical violence;
9. We refuse to participate in any psychological or spiritual violence as well.
10. We will accept/absorb any suffering that results from our direct action without anger or retaliation;
11. We will do our best to take on ourselves any suffering that our direct action causes our opponent;
12. We will not fear (or seek) our own death but if death comes to us out of our quest for justice, we will accept it as a gift from God and know "that death is not the end, but the beginning of life." ⁵

³ Primary sources include Gandhi's *My Experiment with Truth* and King's *A Testament of Hope* (collected works).

⁴ Gandhi, *Harijan*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.

⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer's last words before being hanged by the Nazis.

Biblical Texts that support and inform Gandhi's call to *Soulforce*:
(a) for the development of our inner lives and (b) for the transformation of society.



Isaiah 1:10-18 "What good are your sacrifices to me? I am tired of your offerings. Incense is an abomination to me. I am offended by the noise of your solemn assemblies. When you lift your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. When you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood. Wash. Make yourself clean. Quit doing evil and learn to do good. What is good? Seek justice. Relieve the oppressed. Care for children without fathers and women without husbands. Come now and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

Hosea 6: 4-6 "What shall I do unto thee, O Judah? Your goodness is as a morning dew that disappears with the first light...I desired mercy, and not sacrifice. I wanted you to know me, not bring burnt offerings unto me."

Amos 5:21-24 "I hate, I despise your feast days. I will not smell the incense in your holy assemblies. Though you bring me offerings, I will not accept them. Shut up your noisy singing. I will not listen to the music of your orchestras and choirs. Instead, let justice run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Micah 6:8 "What kind of worship does God want from me? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn child as an offering for my sin? No! This is what the Lord requires: do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Jeremiah 7:22-23 "In the days I rescued your fathers out of Egypt, I didn't ask for burnt offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people: and walk in the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you...(23:5) "Behold, the days come that I will raise up a king who shall execute righteousness & justice in the earth. In that day you'll be saved."

Isaiah 58:6ff "What kind of fast do I want from you? ...to let the oppressed go free, to give bread to the hungry, to house the homeless in your own dwellings, to cloth the naked. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning & thy health spring forth speedily."

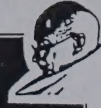
Matthew 23:23 "Too bad for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You know how to tithe the spices in your gardens, but you have neglected the weightier matters of the Law: Justice, Mercy, and Good faith. Those you should have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! Straining out gnats and swallowing camels."

Mark 11:42 "Woe to you Pharisees for you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God..."

Matthew 25:31-46 "I was hungry, and you gave me meat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. Naked, and you clothed me. Sick, and you visited me. In prison, and you came unto me. Enter into your reward. For when you did it unto the least of these my sisters and brothers, you did it unto me."



THE SOULFORCE VOWS (1921, 1939, 1963)



Vows Taken by Marchers With Gandhi, 1921

1. A civil resister will harbor no anger.
2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.
3. In so doing, he will put up with assaults from the opponent, never retaliate; but he will not submit, out of fear of punishment, to any order given in anger.
4. He will voluntarily submit to the arrest and he will not resist the attachment or removal of his own property.
5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it, even though in defending it he might lose his life. He will never retaliate.
6. Non-retaliation excludes swearing and cursing.
7. He will never insult his opponent, nor take part in the newly coined cries contrary to the spirit of nonviolence.
8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or its officials, English or Indian.
9. If any one insults an official or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or assault at the risk of his own life.¹

Vows Taken by Marchers with Gandhi, 1939

1. He must have a living faith in God.
2. He must believe in truth and nonviolence as his creed and, therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.
3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up life and possessions.
4. He must be a habitual khadi-wearer and spinner.
5. He must be a teetotaler and be free from all intoxicants.
6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.
7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are especially devised to hurt his self-respect.²

Vows by Marchers with Dr. King, 1963

1. Meditate daily on the life and teachings of Jesus,
2. Remember that the nonviolent movement seeks justice and reconciliation - not victory.
3. Walk and talk in the manner of love; for God is love.
4. Pray daily to be used by God in order that all men and women might be free.
5. Sacrifice personal wishes that all might be free.
6. Observe with friend & foes the ordinary rules of courtesy.
7. Perform regular service for others and for the world.
8. Refrain from violence of fist, tongue, and heart.
9. Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
10. Follow the directions of the Movement leaders and of the captains on demonstrations.³

FIVE SOUL FORCE VOWS

In his revolutionary 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus suggests some very demanding goals for his disciples. Modern readers, including myself, have rationalized the commands of Jesus. We celebrate his words, but we do not obey them. We applaud his life but don't even try to live by his example. Gandhi and King took Jesus' life and teachings seriously as you will see in the soulforce vows they asked marchers to sign in 1921, 1939, & 1963. Here is a summary of those vows.

1. VOW TO TRUTH

I promise to seek the truth, to live by the truth, and to confront untruth wherever I find it.

2. VOW TO LOVE (NONVIOLENCE)

I promise to reject violence (physical violence, spiritual violence, psychological violence) and to use only the methods of nonviolence in my search for truth and my confrontation with untruth.

3. VOW TO ABSORB SUFFERING

I promise to take on myself without complaint any suffering that might result from my confrontation with untruth and to do all in my power to help my adversary avoid all suffering, especially the suffering that might result from our confrontation.

4. VOW TO CONTROL PASSIONS

I promise to control my appetite for food, sex, intoxicants, entertainment, position, and power that my best self might be free to join with my Creator in doing justice (making things fair for all).

5. VOW TO LIMIT POSSESSIONS

I promise to limit my possessions to those things which I really need to survive and to see myself as God's trustee over all other possessions, using them exclusively to help God make things fair for all.

I have re-discovered the life and teachings of Jesus through the Soulforce principles of Gandhi and King. They reduced his principles to practice. They helped me understand. Now, unlike the rich young man, I have another chance to decide if I'm going to take seriously Jesus' ancient commands or "turn away sorrowing." (Matthew 19:16-26)

Your name: _____

Date: _____

¹ Dhawan, Gopinath, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*

² Op. Cit., pp 182-183.

³ Young, Andrew, *An Easy Burden*, p. 238.

